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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/798,739	03/10/2004	George D. Hermann	FGRTNA00602	6427
40518 7590 08/01/2008 LEVINE BAGADE HAN LLP 2483 EAST BAYSHORE ROAD, SUITE 100 PALO ALTO, CA 94303				
EXAMINER				
RYCKMAN, MELISSA K				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3773				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
08/01/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/798,739

Applicant(s)

HERMANN ET AL.

Examiner

MELISSA RYCKMAN

Art Unit

3773

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 July 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 7, 8, 11 and 24-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 24-27 and 34-40 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7, 8, 11 and 28-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 7/10/08 has been entered.

Election/Restrictions

Claims 24-27 and 34-40 are directed to an invention that is independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed for the following reasons:

-In the reply filed on 3/19/07, the applicant elected Group I, which is directed towards a device-type invention.

-Newly submitted claims 24-27 and 34-40 are directed towards a method-type invention, which is a part of Group II, a nonelected invention.

Therefore, newly submitted claims 24-27 and 34-40 are withdrawn from consideration as being directed towards a non-elected invention.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 7,8,11, and 28-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Militana (U.S. Patent No. 3,019,790).

Militana teaches a tissue approximating device comprising:

- first and second jaw (15 and 16) members moveable toward one another,
- a tissue engaging rod (22), said tissue engaging rod having a tissue engaging portion that can extend generally out of the plane of coaptation in a first position (Figs. 2 and 6), said tissue engaging rod moveable a to a second tissue engaging position that transects the plane of coaptation and thereby positioning tissue contacted by the tissue engaging rod between the first and second jaw members (Fig. 6).
- wherein the tissue engaging rod is configured to extend independently of the first and second jaw member (Fig. 2, the rod is capable of being used independently of the first jaw member).
- said first jaw member includes a lumen extending longitudinally through at least a portion of the first jaw member (19)
- said tissue engaging rod is pivotally attached to said first and second jaw members (40)
- positioning tissue contacted by a tissue engaging rod between the first and second jaw end members (Fig. 6)

- positioning tissue comprises moving a tissue engaging rod having a tissue engaging portion that can extend generally out of the plane of coaptation into a first position (Fig. 6)
- moving a tissue engaging rod (43) comprising moving the tissue engaging rod to a second tissue engaging position that transects the plane of coaptation (Fig. 6)
- a first handle integral with the first jaw member, and further comprising a second handle integral with the second jaw member (Fig. 1)
- the first jaw and the second jaw members are rotatably attached to the hinge (17)
- moving the tissue engaging rod (22) comprises retracting the distal end of the tissue engaging rod from a position more distal to the distal end of the first jaw member to a position less distal of the distal end of the first jaw (Fig. 6)

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 32 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Militana (U.S. Patent No. 3,019,790).

Militana teaches the claimed invention including the distal portion forms a substantially non-zero angle with respect to the proximal portion (outer edge of 16 is non-zero angle) but does not specify the first jaw member comprises a distal portion and a proximal portion, and wherein the distal portion is detachable from the proximal portion. However it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the proximal and distal portions separable, as this is a simple matter of design choice and would perform equally as well as the proximal and distal pieces being integral (Nerwin v. Erlichman 168 USPZ 177 (1969)).

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thornton*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 7,8 and 11 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1,2,5-18 of U.S. Patent No, 6,706,048. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because '048 has all of the limitations of the current pending application.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MELISSA RYCKMAN whose telephone number is (571)272-9969. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday 7:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jackie Ho can be reached on (571)-272-4696. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3773

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MKR
/Melissa Ryckman/
Examiner, Art Unit 3773

/Darwin P. Erezol/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3773